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Chairman: Mr. Chowdhury ..... (Bangladesh)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

Contents

Agenda item 116: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.65

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.31

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.68 B

Agenda item 142: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

Agenda item 153: Human resources management (*continued*)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 116: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (*continued*)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.65 (A/C.5/52/30)

1. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), orally presenting the Advisory Committee's report on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.65, said that the Advisory Committee had considered an advance copy of the statement on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.65 (A/C.5/52/30), which the Secretary-General had submitted in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

2. In paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would authorize the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations component of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH) until 31 December 1998, according to the terms of reference and modalities under which the Mission was operating. The three major tasks carried out by MICIVIH, namely, technical assistance, human rights promotion and civic education, and monitoring of the human rights situation, would be retained, with an emphasis on judicial reform, institutional consolidation and local capacity-building. The Advisory Committee further noted the recommendation of the Secretary-General to place the extension of the Mission's presence in a context not only of institutional consolidation but also of transition, in order to prepare successor mechanisms or agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organization of American States (OAS), to fully assume the Mission's responsibilities in institution-building, which required long-term continuity of planning and implementation.

3. The Advisory Committee further noted that no provision had been made in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 for the activities of MICIVIH for 1998. Paragraph 7 and annex I of the Secretary-General's statement indicated that estimated costs for the extension of the Mission's mandate for the period from 1 January to 31 December 1998 would amount to $8,273,300 gross ($7,677,200 net). The Advisory Committee had been informed that during the previous five months the monthly cost for the functioning of MICIVIH had amounted to $514,800, whereas for 1998 it had been estimated at $639,800 per month. That amount had been used to strengthen the Mission in the areas of institution-building, particularly of the judiciary, and of human rights promotion and education.

4. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee had been further informed that the total projected expenditures for the biennium 1996-1997 would amount to $10.8 million at the end of 1997, whereas the amount received in terms of appropriation and commitment authority would total $9.8 million for the same period. The $1 million overrun was attributable to staff costs, since there had been no vacancies during the period.

5. The Advisory Committee wished to point out that administrative backstopping continued to be provided by the United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti (MIPONUH), whose mandate expired in November 1998, and that if the Security Council did not approve an extension of the Mission's mandate beyond that date, it would be necessary to re-examine the administrative requirements of MICIVIH.

6. The Advisory Committee noted that, in order to strengthen the Mission, the Secretary-General proposed to re-establish a presence in nine of the country's regions in order to better fulfil the Mission's monitoring and institution-building responsibilities. It was also proposed to increase the staffing component from 116 to 132 posts and to supplement it by the recruitment of 10 international and 6 local consultants, whose cost would be fully borne by the United Nations. Total personnel costs of $5,860,600 were estimated on the basis of a 10 per cent vacancy rate for 1998.

7. The strengthening of the Mission and the increase in the number of regional offices and staff had led to increases in, *inter alia*, the rental of premises for equipment, maintenance and public information activities. Seventeen additional vehicles, to be provided from existing stock, were also required on account of the poor road conditions and the fact that most of the MICIVIH vehicle stock had come from the peacekeeping operation in Somalia.

8. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/52/L.65, an additional appropriation of $7,677,200 would be required under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 for the activities of MICIVIH for the period from 1 January to 31 December 1998. The Advisory Committee also noted that an additional appropriation of $596,100 would be required under section 32, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

9. **The Chairman** suggested that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/52/30) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should draft resolution A/52/L.65 be adopted, an additional appropriation of $7,677,200 would be required under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. An additional appropriation of $596,100 would also be required under section 32, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Those requirements would be considered at a later date in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

10. *It was so decided.*

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.31 (A/C.5/52/31)

11. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), orally presenting the Advisory Committee's report on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.31, said that the activities outlined in paragraph 3 of the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (A/C.5/52/31) would require related resources equivalent to one staff each at the P-4 level and the General Service level to assist in all aspects of the Secretary-General's involvement in the Central American peace process. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/52/L.31, an additional appropriation of $173,800 would be required under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. An additional appropriation of $32,300 would also be required under section 32, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

12. **The Chairman** suggested that, on the basis of the statement of programme budget implications (A/C.5/52/31) and the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should draft resolution A/52/L.31 be adopted, an additional appropriation of $173,800 would be required under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999. An additional appropriation of $32,300 would also be required under section 32, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment. Those requirements would be considered at a later date in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999.

13. *It was so decided.*

14. **Mr. Lozinski** (Russian Federation) said that it would be helpful if the Secretariat could produce documents for delegations in a more user-friendly format. In the item under consideration, pages 2 and 3 of the Russian version of the Secretary-General's statement (A/C.5/52/31) appeared in Spanish. He hoped that such lapses would not occur again in the future.

15. **The Chairman** said that he would ask the Secretariat to convey the Committee's concerns to the relevant Secretariat offices.

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.68 B (A/C.5/52/33)

16. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), orally presenting the Advisory Committee's report on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/52/L.68 B, said that the Advisory Committee had considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and relating to the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (A/C.5/52/33).

17. As indicated in the Secretary-General's statement, the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan would continue its primary role in conducting United Nations peacemaking activities in Afghanistan. The Special Mission would continue to operate in Islamabad and Kabul and, for reasons indicated in paragraph 5 of the Secretary-General's statement, three additional small offices/liaison outposts would be opened in Kandahar, Mazar-I-Sharif and Turkmenistan in 1998.

18. In order to allow for greater flexibility in the implementation of the Mission's mandate, provisions for staffing would be made under temporary assistance. The requirements would include the provision for continuation through 1998 of the staffing level approved by the General Assembly for 1997, namely, an Assistant Secretary-General as the Head of the Special Mission to Afghanistan, six posts from the Professional category and above, two General Service posts, four Field Service posts and 17 local level staff. The requirements would also include provision for continuation of five military advisers and two civilian police posts. An additional requirement of seven local level posts had been requested to staff the three new liaison offices.

19. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee had been informed that the estimates had been prepared on the basis of standard costs, but that in certain instances they had been based on mission-specific requirements as well as on the experience gained in the area of operation. That had been reflected, for example, in differences between the 1997 submission and the 1998 estimates for such items as staff travel and vehicle maintenance and operation.

20. On the basis of the assumptions outlined in paragraphs 2 to 6 of his statement, the Secretary-General estimated that an additional appropriation of $4,007,700 would be required for continuation of activities during 1998, under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget. An additional appropriation of $327,300 would also be required under expenditure section 32, Staff assessment, to be offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

21. The Advisory Committee recalled that, in July 1997, the Secretary-General had appointed a Special Envoy to Afghanistan whose terms of appointment had been on a "when-actually-employed basis". The Advisory Committee wished to point out that there was no mention of that fact in the Secretary-General's statement, nor had travel requirements for the Special Envoy been included in the estimates.

22. The Advisory Committee noted that, under the terms of paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/52/L.68 B, the Secretary-General would be encouraged to pursue the question of preliminary studies on the imposition of an effective arms embargo and how such an embargo could be implemented in a fair and verifiable manner. While no resources had been included in the estimates for that purpose, the Advisory Committee had been informed, upon enquiry, that the studies would possibly be undertaken and financed through voluntary contributions.

23. The Advisory Committee recalled that, prior to January 1997, the Special Mission had been using the aircraft operated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCHA). However, since January 1997, a separate lease/charter arrangement for aircraft for the Special Mission had been in place. The Advisory Committee had been informed that, notwithstanding the fact that use of UNOCHA aircraft would cost $100,000 less than the cost of a separate airplane, it was not feasible to use the UNOCHA aircraft, which ran on a set schedule and was often not available at the appropriate time for the activities of the Special Mission.

24. Bearing in mind the foregoing comments and observations, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Fifth Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/52/L.68 B, an additional appropriation of $4,007,700 would be required under section 3, Peacekeeping operations and special missions, of the proposed programme budget. An additional appropriation of $327,300 would also be required under section 32, Staff assessment, to be offset by the same amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

25. **Mr. Sial** (Pakistan) said that he had been instructed by his Government to seek from the Secretariat written responses to a number of specific questions. He wished to know how many missions the Special Mission had undertaken to Afghanistan during 1997, both from Islamabad and from Headquarters. He also sought information regarding the total expenditure on travel, including subsistence allowances, from both Islamabad and Headquarters, as well as the total expenditure on the rental of premises for accommodation in Pakistan and elsewhere. He asked about the locations other than Pakistan in which staff of the Special Mission were located and wanted to know what the nationalities of the staff of the Special Mission were. His Government also wished to know the details of expenditures on alterations and renovations to premises occupied by the Special Mission, the locations at which those amounts had been spent, the justification for the increase in the amounts requested for travel from Headquarters and the reasons for the increase in the rental of premises for the Special Mission.

26. **Mr. Sach** (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, with the assistance of the Department of Political Affairs, he would endeavour to provide written responses later that day to those questions.

27. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to defer consideration of the item.

28. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 142: Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*)

(a) Financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations (*continued*) (A/C.5/52/L.7)

Draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.7

29. **Ms. Peña** (Mexico), reporting on the results of informal consultations on the draft resolution, said that, even though the extensive consultations held had produced a good basis for future work on the item, it had not been possible to reach agreement on a recommendation to the Committee.

She therefore proposed that the matter should be taken up again during the Committee's resumed session.

30. **Mr. Bond** (United States of America) said that although he supported the general thrust of the draft resolution in its current form, his delegation was not in a position to approve the text. It would have a number of substantive proposals to make on the question during the Committee's resumed session.

31. **The Chairman** suggested that, in the light of the statement made by the representative of Mexico, the Committee should defer to the second part of its resumed session consideration of the question of third-party liability: temporal and financial limitations.

32. *It was so decided.*

Agenda item 153: Human resources management (*continued*) (A/C.5/52/L.14)

Draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.14

33. **Ms. Incera** (Costa Rica), introducing draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.14 on human resources management, said that the various sections of the draft resolution dealt with the family leave programme, implementation of the performance appraisal system, the system of performance awards or bonuses, amendments to the Staff Rules and the implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/226, specifically the restriction contained in paragraph 26 of section III.B thereof and the eligibility of staff for internal vacancies as provided for in paragraph 27.

34. *Draft resolution A/C.5/52/L.14 was adopted.*

35. **Mr. Yamagiwa** (Japan), explaining his delegation's position on the resolution just adopted, said that General Assembly resolution 51/226 was so complex that further clarifications were required before it could be implemented in a manner consistent with the current Staff Regulations and Rules. His delegation supported the thrust of paragraph 2 of section V of the new resolution, which would ensure that only staff who had passed a national competitive examination could be recruited to posts at the P-1 to P-3 levels. However, the wording of paragraph 1 of section V was more problematical. While apparently not in contradiction with what had been said about the subject previously, paragraph 1 failed to exempt a sufficient number of the short-term appointees referred to in paragraph 26 of resolution 51/226. Japan was therefore pleased that the General Assembly planned to revert to the matter at the first part of its resumed fifty-second session, as stated in paragraph 3 of section V.

36. **Mr. Herrera** (Mexico) requested the Secretariat to correct a minor translation error in the Spanish version of section II, paragraph 2.

37. **Mr. Bond** (United States of America) said that his delegation continued to have misgivings about the issue of acquired rights as outlined by the Secretariat in its conference room paper on the implementation of resolution 51/226 (A/C.5/52/CRP.2). He trusted that a clearer picture of the concept of acquired rights would emerge in subsequent discussions.

38. In relation to paragraph 27 of resolution 51/226, his delegation had had in mind a non-monetary incentive for mission service, and he trusted that the Fifth Committee would continue to bear such a concept in mind.

39. **Ms. Goicochea Estenoz** (Cuba) said that discussion of human resources management had taken up too much time for a non-personnel year. With reference to section III, paragraph 1, the translation into Spanish had diluted the political impact of the original English text. The Secretariat should make an appropriate correction or clarification. Her delegation also welcomed the intention stated in section V, paragraph 3, to continue consideration of the implementation of resolution 51/226.

40. **Ms. Emerson** (Portugal) said that the General Assembly should have the courage to recognize that certain elements of resolution 51/226 did not serve the best interests of the Organization and should be amended accordingly.

41. **Mr. Saha** (India) said that parts of resolution 51/226 were indeed difficult to interpret, and the General Assembly should resume its consideration of the issue.

42. **Mr. Amnéus** (Sweden) said that the resolution just adopted had not addressed the question of the privileges and immunities of United Nations officials. That omission reflected not a lack of interest but a lack of time to debate the issue.

43. **Mr. Ahounou** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that his delegation had supported the adoption of resolution 51/226 on the understanding that staff members who had made sacrifices in the field should receive an appropriate reward. If problems subsequently arose with any part of that resolution, it should be renegotiated as a whole.

44. **Ms. Goicochea Estenoz** (Cuba) said that her delegation had received an unconfirmed report that an administrative instruction had been circulated to staff stating that there would be a review of the status of recruitment of personnel and that those staff members who currently held fixed-term contracts would have those contracts renewed, but for a reduced period. The Assistant Secretary-General

for Human Resources Management should indicate whether such an instruction actually existed. If it did, it should be made available to the Fifth Committee. Her delegation also wished to know which provisions of resolution 51/226 would be implemented in respect of any such review. Information should also be provided with regard to the implications of and justification for such a review.

45. **Ms. Salim** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management) said, with regard to the concerns raised by the representative of Cuba, that document ST/AI/1997/7 had been issued to deal with recruitment procedures for professional staff in connection with the implementation of resolution 51/226. Section 6 of the instruction required temporary appointments to be justified by temporary needs and stipulated that the offer of employment should inform temporary staff that their appointment might be terminated when the temporary need no longer existed. That requirement would apply only to future staff, since no contract had yet been issued under the provisions of instruction ST/AI/1997/7. It did not apply to current staff members and did not provide for termination of their appointment. The instruction had been the subject of Secretariat-wide staff consultation through established procedures.

46. With regard to current staff members on fixed-term contracts, managers had been instructed not to extend such contracts beyond February 1998. If and when the General Assembly adopted the proposed programme budget, the Secretariat would not be in a position to conduct the necessary comparative review of staff which had been agreed as a result of staff-management consultations by the end of 1997. It had therefore been decided to allow the extension of such fixed-term contracts until the end of February in order to ensure fairness in considering the fate of all the staff concerned.

47. No administrative instruction had been issued in respect of the current redeployment process since no final budget decision had been reached by the General Assembly. The Department of Administration and Management had issued guidance on dealing with anticipated problems to all departments and offices. The guidance had been provided to assist departments in completing a review of all staff whose posts might be affected by the proposed reduction in posts throughout the Secretariat. Staff-management consultations had been maintained throughout. Staff had been asked for input and their suggestions had by and large been incorporated into the resulting guidelines, which had been made available to the Fifth Committee.

48. In determining the placement of staff against available posts, the Secretariat had established a Task Force to outline the various administrative options and procedures that were available to deal with redeployment. A temporary recruitment freeze against vacant posts had been introduced in the General Service category at Headquarters. Agreed terminations would be considered on a case-by-case basis, provided that the resulting vacant post would be abolished to meet the 1998-1999 post-reduction targets or would become available for placement of a staff member from the redeployment list. Other organizations and agencies of the United Nations common system had been approached with the request to consider potential redeployees from the United Nations Secretariat.

49. Guidelines had been issued outlining administrative steps and key procedures to be followed by the affected departments and offices. A list was being compiled which would match redeployees against corresponding vacancies. The list would subsequently be presented to a joint advisory panel to consider placement of candidates. Where appropriate, the Office of Human Resources Management intended to provide related training to redeployed staff to boost their qualifications for vacant posts. Finally, in some cases where staff could not be accommodated in the Secretariat, temporary field assignments in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions would be explored. In cases where it proved impossible to redeploy staff, the Secretary-General intended to revert to the General Assembly for guidance on the appropriate course of action.

50. **Ms. Goicochea Estenoz** (Cuba) asked the Assistant Secretary-General to put her replies in writing and circulate them to Member States. It was obvious that the issue of human resources management would have to be explored further during the first part of the Fifth Committee's resumed fifty-second session.

51. Given that there were more vacancies than posts scheduled for elimination, the Office of Human Resources management should indicate why fixed-term contracts were being extended only until the end of February 1998. The Assistant Secretary-General should also indicate what would happen to posts for permanent staff who were currently serving on field missions. Finally, her delegation had noted that $13 million had been requested for training under the proposed programme budget, but Action 19 of the Secretary-General's programme for reform contained in document A/51/950 mentioned an amount of $19 million. No Secretariat official had been able to inform her delegation where it could find that figure in the budget, and the Assistant Secretary-General's comments on the matter would be most welcome.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.